

CLAIMS

1. A surgical clip applier, comprising:

a handle assembly disposed generally in a first plane;

a first clip assembly adapted to receive only a single clip generally in a second plane, the first clip assembly having a first operative position wherein the

5 second plane is generally parallel to the first plane;

a second clip assembly adapted to receive multiple clips, generally in a third plane, the second clip assembly having a second operative position wherein the third plane is generally parallel to the first plane; and

the handle assembly being sized and configured to receive alternatively
10 the first clip assembly in the first operative position and the second clip assembly in the second operative position.

2. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 1, further comprising:

a first coupling member included in the housing assembly and having a first configuration;

5 a second coupling member included in the first clip assembly and having a second configuration complimentary to the first configuration;

a third coupling member included in the second clip assembly and having the second configuration complimentary to the first configuration.

3. The surgical clip appliers recited in Claim 2, wherein:

one of the first coupling member in the handle assembly includes portions defining a post;

the other of the second coupling member and the handle assembly
5 includes a hole sized and configured to receive the post.

4. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 3, wherein the post has a snap-fit relationship with the hole.

5. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 3, wherein the portions defining the hole are included in the handle assembly. -

6. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 5, wherein the handle assembly has a scissors configuration with a hinge having an axis generally perpendicular to the first plane.

7. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 6, wherein the portions defining the hole are included in the hinge.

8. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 7, wherein the hole is defined along the axis of the hinge.

9. The surgical clip applier recited in Claim 1, further comprising:
a first jaw component included in the first clip assembly;

a second jaw component included in the second clip assembly; and
the first jaw component having the same size and shape as the second
5 jaw component.

10. A jaw assembly adapted for use with a handle assembly in a surgical clip
applier, comprising:

a pair of jaws adapted to receive a surgical clip, the jaws being movable
between an open state and a closed state;

5 a pair of elongate support arms each adapted to support an associated
one of the jaws between the open state of the jaws and the closed state of the jaws;

a bridge disposed between the support arms to hold the jaws in an
aligned relationship between the open state and the closed state;

a housing disposed over at least the bridge, the housing having a
10 generally fixed relationship with the bridge while permitting movement of the jaws
between the open state and the closed state; and

a coupling included in the housing, the coupling being adapted for
attaching the housing to the handle assembly.

11. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 10, wherein:

the jaws, the support arms, and the bridge are integral and form a jaw
component.

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12. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 11, wherein the housing the molded over the bridge of the jaw component.

13 The jaw assembly recited in Claim 10, wherein the arms are resilient between the open position of the jaws and the closed position of the jaws.

14. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 13, wherein at least one of the arms is biased to maintain the jaws in the open position.

15. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 10 wherein:

the arms are disposed generally in a plane separating a first side of the arms from a second side of the arms; and

the housing is disposed with first portions adjacent the first side of the
5 arms and second portions adjacent the second side of the arms.

16. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 15, wherein the second portions of the housing are included in the coupling.

17. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 15, wherein the jaws are movable in the plane between the open state and the closed state.

18. The jaw assembly recited in Claim 17, wherein the arms are in contact with only the first portions of the housing and the second portions of the housing when the jaws are in the closed position.

19. A method for operating a surgical clip applier including a handle, a single clip jaw assembly and a multiple clip jaw assembly, comprising the steps of:

removing one of the single clip jaw assembly and the multiple clip jaw assembly from an overlying operative relationship with the handle;

5 disposing of the one jaw assembly; and

mounting the other jaw assembly to the handle in the overlying operative relationship with the handle.

20. The method recited in Claim 19, wherein the removing step includes the step of:

disengaging the one clip assembly from a snap-fit relationship with the handle.

21. The method recited in Claim 19, wherein the handle is disposed generally in a first plane, the one clip assembly is disposed generally in a second plane, and the removing step includes the steps of:

withdrawing the one clip assembly from the handle; and

5 during the withdrawing step maintaining the first plane of the handle generally parallel to the second plane of the one clip assembly.

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22. The method recited in Claim 19, wherein the handle includes portions defining one of a post and a complimentary hole, and the one clip assembly includes portions defining the other of the post and the complimentary hole, and the removing step includes the steps of:

5 withdrawing the post from the complimentary hole.

23. The method recited in Claim 22 wherein the handle has the configuration of scissors with a hinge having an axis, and the method further comprises the step of:
forming the complimentary hole along the axis of the hinge of the handle.